United Nations S/2007/566

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2007
English
Original: French

Letter dated 20 September 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1772 (2007), in which the Council requested me to report to it within 30 days after the adoption of the resolution, I have the honour to inform members of the Council of the steps I have undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 6, 7, 15 and 16 of the resolution since its adoption.

In implementation of paragraph 6, in which the Council requested me to intensify my efforts to strengthen the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) and promote an all-inclusive political process, I have initiated the development of an integrated strategy for Somalia based on a two-track approach: (a) a political track to encourage dialogue between the Transitional Federal Government and all opposition groups both inside and outside Somalia, in the hope of bringing about a cessation of hostilities that would allow for the establishment of broad-based and inclusive transitional institutions; and (b) a security track that would necessitate the strengthening of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to a level that provides the necessary conditions for the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces.

In an effort to promote an all-inclusive political process, in close cooperation with regional and international partners, Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, participated in the meeting of the International Contact Group in Rome on 10 September 2007, at which participants called on the transitional federal institutions to implement in good faith the recommendations of NRC and to urgently develop a road map for the remainder of the transition period, including the drafting of the new Federal Constitution, the conduct of a population census and preparations for national elections in 2009, as set out in the Transitional Federal Charter.

Further to my letter to the Council dated 27 August 2007 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), I recommend that UNPOS be provided with the necessary resources to implement an integrated United Nations approach for Somalia leading to a common United Nations peacebuilding strategy.

The strategy will include the facilitation of mediation with all Somali parties; the coordination of United Nations political, security, electoral, humanitarian and development support to the Somali transitional federal institutions; and collaboration with external partners engaged in facilitation efforts. At Headquarters, discussions are under way on the possible establishment of an integrated task force, to be led by the Department of Political Affairs, to define common United Nations

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strategic objectives in Somalia that would inform the elaboration of a United Nations integrated plan.

With respect to AMISOM, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Safety and Security have initiated discussions on further support that could be provided to the Mission and will soon consult with the African Union on the nature and scope of that support. The Department of Safety and Security will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the security situation in Mogadishu to determine the requisite capacity for AMISOM to secure that city and advise the Secretary-General on the possibility of relocating UNPOS from Nairobi to Somalia.

Since my last report on Somalia, a team of 10 military, police and civilian planners has fully deployed to Addis Ababa and is assisting the African Union in the continued planning and management of its mission in Somalia. Among other activities, the United Nations planners have assisted the African Union in revising the concept of operations for AMISOM and provided briefings to a Burundian reconnaissance team before it undertook an assessment visit to Mogadishu.

In a letter dated 4 August, African Union Chairperson Konaré reiterated the call of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the United Nations to put in place a financial, logistical and technical support package for AMISOM, and proposed that experts from the two organizations should meet to work out the details of such a package. Despite the absence of the essential conditions for a peacekeeping operation to succeed, it is still important to provide further support to AMISOM to enable it to increase its strength and effectiveness, as it could help in stabilizing Mogadishu, at least in the short term. Currently, the African Union is facing serious financial, logistical and other constraints in deploying troops which would join the two Ugandan battalions already in the Somali capital. I have informed Mr. Konaré that the United Nations stands ready to explore, together with the African Union, how it may provide further assistance in strengthening and expanding the Mission's presence on the ground. In addition to providing further technical advice to the ongoing efforts at African Union headquarters, the United Nations could assist in mobilizing bilateral assistance for troop-contributing countries, thereby speeding up the deployment of pledged contingents and possibly encouraging other countries to contribute troops. In this connection, we have requested the African Union to provide detailed information on the Mission's concept of operations and supporting plans, as well as any indication of the type of support that it envisions. Once the United Nations receives this information, we will be better placed to prepare for the proposed meeting of technical experts to develop an appropriate support package.

I remain of the firm belief that it is crucial to ensure that the conditions set out in my report of 25 June 2007 are in place before the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation can be considered a realistic and viable option.

The security situation in Mogadishu has been deteriorating in recent weeks, with a sharp increase in targeted assassinations and incidents of direct armed confrontation between Transitional Federal Government and Ethiopian forces on one side and insurgent groups on the other. In addition, clashes between clans and sub-clans increased in other regions of southern Somalia during the month of August. In view of the current security environment, a new technical assessment

mission which could spend enough time inside Somalia to gather detailed information about the conditions on the ground has not been possible. On the other hand, I did not consider it worthwhile to dispatch an assessment mission to the region with only limited access to Somalia, as such a mission would have been unlikely to add much to the findings of the one that was sent in March of this year. Nevertheless, military and other experts have continued to review and update the existing contingency plans. While the probable tasks and disposition of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in southern and central Somalia have not changed significantly since my last report, the continuing volatility of the security situation could mean that additional troops with armoured vehicles would be required.

In the meantime, given the complex security situation in Somalia, it may not be advisable to limit the options for security arrangements only to the deployment of AMISOM and a United Nations peacekeeping force. One other option that could be explored is the deployment of a robust multinational force or coalition of willing partners for a specific period of time, with the limited objective of securing a specific area that could pave the way for the withdrawal of foreign forces.

In early July, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations held a series of informal exploratory meetings with potential troop contributors, during which they were given an opportunity to discuss the details of the Organization's contingency plans and indicate their possible interest in participating in a possible future mission in Somalia. Although some of the Member States that participated in these meetings expressed a tentative interest in providing troops, most of them made it clear that they would not commit personnel to an operation in Somalia unless the necessary conditions were in place, in particular at a time of unprecedented demands on United Nations peacekeeping.

On the humanitarian side, the food security and nutrition situation has deteriorated dramatically in the Lower and Middle Shabelle regions of Somalia. According to the September 2007 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FAO/FEWSNET) food and crop assessment, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased from 1 million to 1.5 million. This figure includes 295,000 people in a humanitarian emergency, requiring life-saving interventions; 490,000 people in acute food and livelihood crisis, requiring livelihood support; an estimated 325,000 additional internally displaced persons (IDPs) since April 2007; and 400,000 protracted IDPs. Some 85 per cent of those identified as being in a humanitarian emergency and 31 per cent of those identified as being in acute food and livelihood crisis are in the Shabelle regions. Recent nutrition surveys confirm that acute malnutrition rates in those areas are currently above the 15-per-cent emergency threshold. Insecurity in the south-central regions due to banditry and illegal roadblocks by armed freelance militias (238 roadblocks reported as of August) that impose taxes on humanitarian commodities are the main impediments to aid delivery.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia is threatening commercial shipping and impeding the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. The rise in the frequency of pirate attacks has resulted in higher shipping costs and a significant reduction in the number of cargo vessels in the water. Close to 80 per cent of World Food Programme (WFP) assistance to Somalia is shipped by sea; however, due to piracy, the availability of ships willing to carry food to the country has been halved. So far this year, there have been 15 attacks on ships in or near Somali waters, including

two on WFP-contracted vessels, with a security guard killed in one of them. In 2006, there were 10 attacks.

In March 2006 the Security Council responded to reports of piracy in a presidential statement which encouraged United Nations Member States with naval vessels and military aircraft operating in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant against piracy and to take action to protect merchant shipping, especially vessels being used to transport humanitarian aid.

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon